

**3 May 2016**

**Rounds 5 & 6 – Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium – 5 / 7 May 2016**

## **PREVIEW**

### **TCR drivers face the legendary track in the Ardennes hills**

The third race meeting of the TCR International Series takes place this week at Spa-Francorchamps, a legendary racetrack in motorsport history.

The 7-kilometre circuit – one of the longest permanent tracks – winds up the Ardennes hills in South-East Belgium.

Inaugurated in 1922 as an open-road course, the circuit underwent many changes during the years; the current layout dates back to 2007. It has been home to 49 editions out of 61 of the F1 Belgian GP, from 1950 to 2015.

This weekend the TCR International Series is part of the 6 Hours of Spa, second round of the FIA World Endurance Championship. And this resulted in an adjustment of the usual format.

The drivers will hit the track first on Thursday, for two 30-minute Free Practice sessions; the Qualifying will take place Friday in the early afternoon, followed by the first Race in the late afternoon. Race 2 will start on Saturday at lunch time.

### **TCR in Spa – the event at a glance**

Lap distance: 7.00 km

Race distance: 9 laps

Start: standing

Grids: determined by Qualifying results (Q1+Q2) with top-10 reversed for Race 2

Timetable:	Thursday, 11:30/12:00	Free Practice 1
	Thursday, 15:45/16:15	Free Practice 2
	Friday, 13:40/14:15	Qualifying (Q1 + Q2)
	Friday, 17:30	Race 1
	Saturday, 12:35	Race 2

all times: GMT +2

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## Sébastien Loeb Racing at Spa with two Peugeot 308 cars

The Belgian event will mark the first appearance of the Peugeot brands in a TCR competition.

Two Peugeot 308 Racing Cup cars have been entrusted by Peugeot Sport to the Sébastien Loeb Racing for racing at Spa, and the team has chosen Grégory Guilvert and Jimmy Claret to drive the two Peugeot 308 Racing Cup cars in the TCR International Series event, next week at Spa-Francorchamps.

*"We are proud that Peugeot Sport has entrusted the two cars to our team for their maiden appearance in the TCR International Series. We are happy to take this responsibility, as our team is ambitious and always looking for delivering the best performance. Thanks to Peugeot Sport we may count on the experience of Guilvert who has developed the car. As for Claret, he's a young and fast driver, and very motivated. We have a strong pair of drivers that will help us to make a good job,"* said the team's sporting director Franck Tiné.

The 34-year-old Guilvert is a test driver for Peugeot Sport and took part in the technical development of racing cars such as the RCZ Racing Cup, the 208 T16 Pikes Peak and, more recently, the 308 Racing Cup. His racing CV includes the title in the 2009 Peugeot Spider Cup and race victories in the French Supertourisme, the European GT Championship and the Blancpain Endurance Series.

*"As test driver of the 308 Racing Cup I am thrilled to drive the car in an actual race meeting. We have to face a unique racetrack and a top-level championship, which makes me approach this task humbly, but with a lot of motivation because I very much wish to show the potential of the car in both, performance and reliability,"* he said.

Claret, 25-years old, only began racing in the 2013 Peugeot 208 Racing Cup in which he finished as vice-champion in 2014, behind his brother Teddy. Last year he was classified 6<sup>th</sup> in the French Renault Clio Cup.

*"I am excited by the opportunity of driving the 308 Racing Cup. Especially because it is a car entrusted directly by Peugeot Sport to Sébastien Loeb Racing. This is a prestigious step in my racing career. I can't wait to race at Spa and I will do my very best to achieve a good result,"* echoed Claret.

## Corthals and Buri join the field at Spa-Francorchamps

The TCR International Series welcomes two new drivers for the Belgian event at Spa-Francorchamps. Local hero Pierre-Yves Corthals and Finland's Antti Buri will join the field this weekend.

One of the most experienced touring car drivers in Belgium, Corthals (in the picture) was crowned champion a stunning six times in the national and international Renault trophies; he also claimed victories and podium results in Super Production championships as well as competing in the European and the World Touring Car championships.

'Pilou' – as he is better known – returns to circuit racing after a break and will be at the wheel of a SEAT León of the Netherlands-based Ferry Monster Autosport that will also run Loris Hezemans' sister car. Corthals' car will sport the colours of the new TCR Benelux series.

As for the 27-year-old Buri, he will drive a Volkswagen Golf Gti run by the Belgian outfit WRT. The young Finn is in great form; he is taking part in the new ADAC TCR Germany with a LMS Racing SEAT León and last Sunday at the Sachsenring claimed a brilliant victory in the fourth round of the championship.

## **Top Run Motorsport and Mulsanne Racing skip Belgium**

Both Top Run Motorsport and Mulsanne Racing have elected to skip the next event of the TCR International Series that takes place this weekend at Spa-Francorchamps.

The two Italian outfits – that are developing and running a Subaru WRX STi and an Alfa Romeo Giulietta respectively – have chosen to take a break and focus on upgrading their cars.

Top Run team manager Renato Russo explained: *"Following the meeting we had in Tokyo with Subaru STi, we agreed on some technical improvements and we were also provided some new parts that are better suited to the TCR regulations. Therefore, bearing in mind the advice we received from Luca Rangoni after the races in Portugal, we have reluctantly decided to skip Spa and produce the maximum effort to run the final version of the TCR car in the following event."*

A press release from Romeo Ferraris engineering company stated: *"Our Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR hit teething problems in the first two events of the season. Problems have been identified and are about to be solved. However we need to check these technical solutions and will do it in the next weeks. For this reason we have taken the hard decision of not racing in Spa and come back in the following events with a more competitive car."*

TCR promoter Marcello Lotti commented: *"We know that it takes time to develop new racing cars. The growth of TCR has been so quick that some of the companies that are building them struggle to keep up with the pace. For a team is always tough to elect to skip a race weekend, so these decisions show how much Top Run and Mulsanne are keen to make their cars efficient and reliable. It's true that we currently lack some cars, but it is clear that the field will be growing as the season goes on."*

## **30 kilos of success ballast for Gianni Morbidelli**

After taking the lead of the Drivers' championship with a victory and a second place in Estoril, Gianni Morbidelli will race at Spa carrying the maximum success ballast of 30 kilos on board his WestCoast Racing Honda Civic TCR.



# press release



The Leopard Racing Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR of 2015 champion Stefano Comini, that finished third and second in the Portuguese races, will be laden by 20 extra kilos.

The lightest success ballast of 10 kilos will be imposed to James Nash's SEAT León TCR of Craft-Bamboo Lukoil; the Briton won the second race at Estoril and is now second in the Drivers' championship, only one point short of Morbidelli.

## **Live streaming and timing from Spa**

Both live streaming and timing from Estoril will be available on the websites [www.tcr-series.com](http://www.tcr-series.com) and [www.tcr-series.tv](http://www.tcr-series.tv).

The live timing will cover all the sessions and races from Thursday morning, while both races will be streamed live.

Streaming of Race 1 will begin Friday at 17:20 local time, while Race 2 will be shown on Saturday from 12:20 local time.

# entry list



## Rounds 5 & 6 – 5 / 7 May 2016 6 HOURS OF SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS

#	team	driver	car
1	Leopard Racing	Stefano Comini (SUI)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
2	Leopard Racing	Jean-Karl Vernay (FRA)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
7	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Davit Kajaia (GEO)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
8	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	Mikhail Grachev (RUS)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
9	B3 Racing Team Hungary	Attila Tassi (HUN)	SEAT León TCR
10	West Coast Racing	Gianni Morbidelli (ITA)	Honda Civic TCR
14	West Coast Racing	Aku Pellinen (FIN)	Honda Civic TCR
24	West Coast Racing	Kevin Gleason (USA)	Honda Civic TCR
30	Sébastien Loeb Racing	Jimmy Claret (FRA)	Peugeot 308 Racing Cup
38	Sébastien Loeb Racing	Grégory Guilvert (FRA)	Peugeot 308 Racing Cup
48	Team WRT	Antti Buri (FIN)	Volkswagen Golf Gti TCR
49	Ferry Monster Autosport	Pierre-Yves Corthals (BEL)	SEAT León TCR
50	Ferry Monster Autosport	Loris Hezemans (NED)	SEAT León TCR
54	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	James Nash (GBR)	SEAT León TCR
62	B3 Racing Team Hungary	Dušan Borković (SRB)	SEAT León TCR
70	B3 Racing Team Hungary	Mat'ó Homola (SVK)	SEAT León TCR
74	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	Pepe Oriola (ESP)	SEAT León TCR
77	Team Craft-Bamboo LUKOIL	Sergey Afanasyev (RUS)	SEAT León TCR